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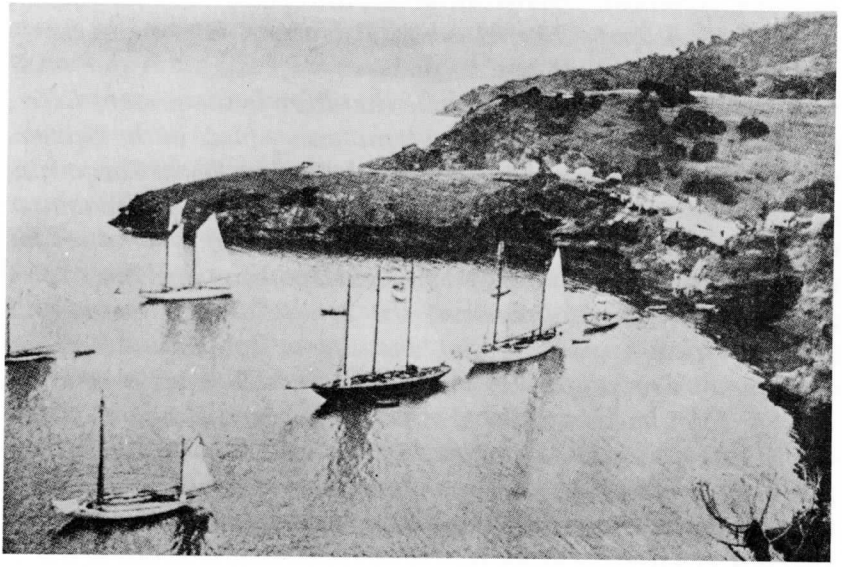
An Islandian on the Islands

BY AUSTIN T. WRIGHT



Phillips, History of Santa Barbara County, California

Pelican Bay on Santa Cruz Island, one of the Santa Barbara group.

INTRODUCTION

Lying off the Southern California coast, mostly within sight and stretching from San Diego to Santa Barbara, is a chain of islands. They were discovered in 1542 by João Rodrigues Cabrilho, the Portugese navigator, better known by the Spanish version of his name—Juan Rodríguez Cabrillo. San Miguel, the northwestern-most of the islands, is his grave, although the exact site of it has never been found.

Because the islands have been privately owned, with some of them latterly becoming Navy property, and because they lack harbors and the exposed coastal waters do not favor pleasure craft, the islands are terra incognita *to the mainlanders. The exception*

is Santa Catalina, owned in our time by the Wrigley chewing-gum magnates, whose harbor settlement of Avalon has been developed as a resort, served by steamer from the port of Los Angeles.

There are only two comprehensive books about the islands: The Channel Islands *by Charles F. Holder (1910) and* The California Islands *by Charles Hillinger (1958). Scientific literature includes botanical, zoological, and anthropological material on some of the islands. The Museum of Natural History in Santa Barbara has pioneered in this work.*

A welcome addition to a sparse literature is the present letter, written by Austin Tappan Wright, professor of law in the University of Pennsylvania and formerly in the University of California, who was in sabbatical residence at Santa Barbara in the winter of 1930-31, where he was putting the finishing touches on his secret, Utopian novel, Islandia, *published posthumously in 1942.**

Ralph Hoffmann, director of the Santa Barbara Museum of Natural History, was Wright's old teacher at Browne and Nichols, the Cambridge preparatory school, at which Austin and his brother John had been educated before going to Harvard, where their father was dean of the graduate school. An ornithologist by training, Hoffmann was also a botanist; and in these twin roles he made many trips to the group of islands directly off Santa Barbara. It was natural for him to include Wright on one of them.

That Wright's letter was written to his brother John, geographer-librarian of the American Geographical Society in New York, accounts for the topographical emphasis. The letter constitutes the fullest such description yet made of Santa Rosa and Santa Cruz. It also beautifully conveys the spirit and feeling of the islands and their relation to the mainland.

A shorter version of Wright's reaction to the trip was written by him for the Museum Leaflet *(February, 1931), and includes this perceptive paragraph:*

"On the mainland we are, so to speak, diffused, and there is too much for us to comprehend, but upon an island the boundaries are definite and apparent and we can understand and know all

*With an introduction by Leonard Bacon; republished in 1958, with an introduction by Sylvia Wright. Cf. also *An Introduction to Islandia* by Basil Davenport, 1942 and "All That Is Poetic in Life" in *A Passion for Books* by Lawrence Clark Powell, 1959.

of it. Our feelings there illustrate the familiar rule, as true of emotion as in mechanics, that limitation increases power. Unless too large or too densely occupied, every island we visit becomes for a time our own kingdom."

Austin Wright's Yankee origin—he was New Hampshire-born —recalls another New England observer on the California coast of a century earlier: Richard Henry Dana, Jr., whose quotidian notes of voyage were transmuted into Two Years before the Mast, *a book of prose with few peers in the realm of Californiana.*

Neither Austin Wright nor Ralph Hoffmann knew how near they were to their own ends when they made this halcyon trip to the islands. Within two years both were dead. Austin Wright was killed in a highway accident near Las Vegas, New Mexico, in September 1931, while driving back to Philadelphia. Ralph Hoffmann fell to his death from a cliff on San Miguel island in July 1932, while climbing for botanical specimens. W. F. Daniell, a Santa Barbara friend, who was present on this trip described by Wright, also accompanied Ralph Hoffmann on his last fatal expedition to San Miguel. Daniell too is now dead.

Still living is the indomitable Lester Rowntree, so vividly described by Wright, now in her 80's and still collecting in the field, lecturing, and writing. Unfortunately, she retained no impressions of this particular trip to the islands in 1930.

*The original of the letter was given to the UCLA Library by John K. Wright, and it is printed with his permission and that of Sylvia Wright Mitasachi, Austin's daughter and literary executrix. The only omissions are the initial and penultimate paragraphs, which convey family greetings, etc., and a few topographical sketches.**

LAWRENCE CLARK POWELL

*Except for this letter of especial Southern California interest, Austin Wright's papers have been deposited by his daughter and brother in the Houghton Library at Harvard University.

The Historical Society of Southern California

116 East Padre Street
Santa Barbara
December 9, 1930

Dear Jack,

I have had some geographical experiences which may interest you and I shall tell you all about them, and this Report can go to you in lieu of a tangible present to yourself, which otherwise would take the form of a book, as this is.

Last Friday at 3:45 A.M., Margot drove me through the moonlit and empty streets of Santa Barbara to Stearns' Wharf, equipped with duffel bag and bedding. On the wharf we met Ralph Hoffmann, a man named Daniell, who has sailed to the China seas before the mast and tramped the Canadian woods, and a little English woman, Mrs. Rowntree, who gathers seeds from all over Calif. and sends them everywhere. They were all similarly equipped. There was a light w. wind blowing. It was a little hazy, the moon declining but still bright, the east black, and a moderate swell rolling in. We stowed our supplies in the hold of the "Ruby A," battened down the hatch and made ourselves comfortable on her afterdeck with rugs and blankets, and at about 4:30 A.M. set out for Santa Rosa Island.

Take a look at a map.

The "Ruby A" is 32 feet long, rather narrow, but heavily built, and being light she was a little lively. I imagine the Santa Barbara Channel is never wholly quiet. So we corkscrewed along, seeing Venus rise out of the Malibu Mountains (west end of the St. Monica range) before the east showed any signs of light. The moon sank lower into a smoking haze. The east took light gradually. The broken skyline of Santa Cruz began to appear faintly. The Santa Ynez Range behind Santa Barbara paled. Gulls began to show black against the sky flying somewhere with a purpose. There was what others declared was a desert sunrise, a cold orange band of haze to the eastward with a pale robins egg sky above it, —and the sun, when first coming up, was a rather cold orange ball. There were belts of haze on the water and a thin fog coming up over Santa Cruz, at one time completely hiding it, and then revealing the tops of the high points which are a little over 2,000 feet. We passed within two or three miles of the west end of the

Island, a high squared mesa of black volcanic rock falling abruptly to the sea on three sides with a long low flat projecting point (called "Black Rock," or Frasers Point) lying a mile or so south.

Meanwhile Santa Rosa was in sight ahead with larger simpler land forms and more suave slopes. As we came near it showed itself as having a shore line of vertical cliffs above a beach, with flat land above the cliffs which inland rose more and more steeply to a second region of flat lands, behind which rose in the distance rather gently rounded mountains. All this was of course scored with canyons, altering the simplicity of the general scheme. We were by this time (about 7:30 a.m.) in the channel between the two Islands, heading towards Beechers Bay, on the east side of Santa Rosa facing the west end of Santa Cruz, and Santa Rosa ahead was a pale green above the cliffs with darker (very dark) greens in the canyons and on some of the hills in patches of chaparral.

The channel was rough and choppy with tide rather than wind, the water very blue. Santa Cruz behind us, more or less under the sun, was hazy and indistinct and looked dark and utterly barren.

The "Ruby A" tied up to a bunch of kelp lying on the surface of clear bluegreen water, and we (Hoffmann, Daniell, Mrs. Rowntree, and I) were put ashore by the Captain in a skiff, landing on a point where a knob of volcanic rock broke the even vertical line of the cliffs (about 50 feet high). Once up on the flatland or lower mesa, one could look along it, here wider, here narrower, always overtopped by the higher mesa, for six or seven miles north and three or four south (to a sand spit). We went south looking for a certain canyon.

Of the four channel islands that parallel the Santa Barbara mainland and that run east and west the two smaller ones at the ends (San Miguel to the west, Anacapa to the east) are uninhabited. Santa Rosa is owned by a company which brings cattle there when the fall rains begin and takes them off in the spring. The cattle come lean from Mexico and when taken off in spring are ready for the slaughter house. The only settlement is three or four miles north of where we landed, and consists only of a few barns, a ranch house, and one or two other houses. The only inhabitants are men who tend the cattle. The only other house on the island,

I'm told, is one near the west end,—a shack. There are of course no roads, no motors, and no telegraph or telephone. Landing on the island is not allowed. Hoffmann whom you surely remember at Browne and Nichols is director of the Santa Barbara Museum of Natural History. He is at work on a flora of the four islands that I have mentioned. Our expedition was therefore primarily botanical. Daniell and I were guests. So was Mrs. R. but she was out to gather seeds, also. Hoffmann's particular botanical purpose was to investigate a little plant called Jepsonia,—originally identified as a species of saxifrage, having two known forms, Parryi and malvifolia (mallow leaved). Later, on being studied, it was discovered to be distinct from the saxifrage and to belong to a genus of which it is the sole member. In the herbaria there are only two or three specimens of malvifolia, and very few of Parryi. It was known to grow at one place near San Diego, at one place on Santa Cruz, and at one place on Santa Rosa. It was very rare and its habits little known. It was reported as flowering before leafing.

So we were all on the lookout for Jepsonia malvifolia.

The place we landed is also famous in another way. As you doubtless know, in California there are many species of pines, some of which exist in widely separated groups of only a few trees each,—dying remnants of once large forests. The most famous of these species is the so-called Torrey Pine which is indigenous only at La Jolla near San Diego and on Santa Rosa near where we landed.

Only two persons have purported to study the Island flora and both studies were long ago. Hoffmann has already found at least one hundred species more than either of these persons ever found. Santa Cruz I. is fairly often visited, of course. Fishermen, hunters, and yachtsmen frequent the coves of both islands, but, Hoffmann says, the number of people who land and go inland on Santa Rosa is very small indeed and the number on Santa Cruz by no means large.

We went up one shallow canyon and came down again and after going about one mile south found a larger one. Meanwhile Mrs. R. had gone off by herself, and Daniell to the top of the ridge. Hoffmann and I found the Torrey Pines, a sturdy strong looking pine with 5 needles, six or eight inches long. Then after quite a

long search I had the good fortune to light upon a Jepsonia malvifolia in flower. The reason we did not find it sooner was, I think, because we were too low. We found it well up the side of the canyon about 300-400 feet above sea level. It is a plant that grows out of a bulb sending up a wirey stem four to six inches long on which grows in a close cluster five or six small whitish flowers with dark dots. The leaves come up separately and lie flat on the ground and are like the leaves of the Henchera to which Jepsonia is related. Hoffmann soon solved the flowering-leaving problem. Evidently the bulb sends up the flower in the fall, but the leaves wait for rain. Therefore sometimes flowers will ripen before leaves come, and sometimes not. We found most J. malvifolias with flowers wide open or already ripe, with no leaves in dry places and with fully developed leaves in wetter ones. We found one or two in bud with leaves about to come up, too. After our first discovery, we found many Jepsonia, on canyon walls, on open mesas, everywhere in fact except on the floors of canyons or where other vegetation was thick—and never below (say) 300 feet above the sea. We gathered many specimens and now all the great Herbariums in the U.S. will have specimens.

Enough for Jepsonia.

We climbed to the top of the upper mesa, and there saw one of the loveliest views I have ever seen. The slope behind us was like this: [sketch]

The upper mesa was perhaps six hundred feet high. Below and behind us were the Torrey Pines growing on the higher steeper canyon slopes.

We looked west six or eight miles to the central peaks of the island. From this central massif ran long curving fingers of rounded ridges with canyons between. The higher mesa on which we were seemed to be of co-equal height with many of these ridges, as though once the island was a table land. The central hills perhaps mark a third level, but erosion is so great in their neighborhood that I can't say so for sure,—nor do I venture to say that the "higher mesa" on which we were marked a plane of table land, and that the original higher eroded plane was not somewhere high above everything. But I do say that this region of forty square miles or so of more or less flat-topped rounded ridges, with the long lines of deep curving canyons running down to the sea and

the shorter lines of smaller tributary canyons, with the suave rounded shapes of the central hills, and all, every bit except of a few dark patches of chaparral on one ridge and hill, all of it grassland, a pale lovely light green, with only one "sign of man" in sight—a long fence running straight up hill and down dale for miles, with a few cattle three or four miles away and very minute as the only living things on earth, with a pair of black ravens circling above us and uttering their throaty remote caws, with sand dunes far to the south and below us,—and all of it a pale delicate green,—I do say it was wonderfully spacious and beautiful.

We went on, botanizing. We found Daniell again and the three of us lunched on the top of the ridge. We walked west again and descended into a great canyon which from above we could see running high and long and deep as far as the centre of the island. At the bottom was a flat floor and very green grass, and there was a running brook. We ascended it for a mile or so, and then descended it and finally climbed out of it up a steep hot slope covered with very low patches of scrub oak, cactus, manzanita, up to the top of the higher mesa again.

In this canyon and upon its sides was one of the queerest of the many queer kinds of rock formations that I have seen in this state. Maybe you know all about it, and, if so, can tell me what it is. There would be a surface of gray-coloured, pebble-substanced, coarse-grained rock. In places this surface was gone, and where it was gone, the inner rock material would be rounded out in hollows and holes, sometimes hemispherical with the outer rock a projecting lip all around, sometimes in deep lenses and the inner rock was much lighter in colour, buff coloured, and its surface was in smoother curves, and it disintegrated into coarse sands. Sometimes a projecting mass of this rock had so many holes opening into each other that it was like a sponge, but much less regular than a sponge is, turned into stone.

Having reached the higher mesa again we started towards the ranch house four or five miles away. For a while we went separate ways, Daniell ahead, Hoffmann in a canyon, I on the ridge watching Hoffmann several hundred feet below. At about four we reached the ranch and went through its high fenced corrals and came out near the sea.

The Captain had brought our stuff ashore, and we made camp

in a low and rather dense line of eucalyptus trees, near the cliff edge. We ate supper in the dark out of cans, Hoffmann and I went to the ranch house in the full moonlight to put his specimens in a press, and talked with the cook and superintendent, who live there in primitive style, and then about 7 he turned in. I walked on the cliffs till about 8, and then slept under eucalyptus branches, which rattled in a strong west wind, blankets over my head to shut out the very bright, liquid, silvery moonlight.

Next morning the four of us were off before sunrise to climb Black Mountain, a part but not the highest part of the central massif, still looking for Jepsonia and also to gather acorns from Quercus Tomentilla, which (if I remember) grows only on the Islands like several other species of things and also to see the Bishop Pines, which are almost as isolated in their groupings as the Torrey Pines. When upon the higher mesa we saw the sun rise over arid-looking Santa Cruz. We left the grassland as we ascended and walked through a mile or two of chaparral, but of a very low growing sort so that there was never any pushing through it, but always a way round on the reddish friable rock. The chaparral consisted principally of evergreen scrub oaks, cactus, and the manzanita, all dwarfed. Why there was no grass here seemed to be due mainly to exposure and partly to soil. The ridge we were climbing was certainly an open one and many of the clumps of chaparral were fighting a losing fight. There were low, mounded, dark green clumps of dwarfed shrubs with the bare reddish-yellow gravel between, and yet here and there, in pockets of this moor-like region of high slopes, were little pocketlike depressions of vivid green grass,—and of course in the distance were always the rounded ridges of the grasslands.

Beyond the chaparral was grass again, at perhaps 1000 feet. We were on Black Mtn. which is the northern buttress of the central massif. Here within a circle of perhaps a quarter mile in diametre were the heads of canyons running down to the north and eastern sides of the island, and within half a mile, another, perhaps the longest of all, ran southeast and opened on the sea south of the easternmost point of the Island. On the northern face of Black Mtn. there are four or five steep canyons all parallel with each other and only a hundred yards or so apart at their heads. They all run downward northerly and then the westernmost one of them curves

easterly and with a higher ridge on its western and north western side gathers in, so to speak, all the others.

I went down into No. 2 (from the east) to a group of Bishop Pines and it was quite a pull down and back, and returned with the cones and branches Hoffmann wanted, while Daniell photographed them for him. At this point they were truly making a last stand fight.

Just below the summit of Black Mtn. (which according to the Coast Survey Chart is about 1250 feet as I remember) is a fine and vigorous grove of Quercus Tomentilla. It is a splendid live oak with very dark and rather large sized leaves of typical live oak shape. It fruits, so they say, biennially. We found it covered with large acorns, shaped like this (life size): [sketch] and sometimes longer and thinner.

Mrs. Rowntree, who can't be five feet, went into the grove and knocked down acorns with a long stick. She was an odd little figure, in sneakers, tan wool stockings, green knickerbockers, white turtle neck sweater almost hiding her head and brown beret pulled very low over her small sunburned, red cheeked face.

Two noble, well known, and very wealthy Englishmen are each making a collection of rare trees. Each has separately asked her to get acorns from this (and other) trees. Neither knows of the other's request. They try to outvie each other in their novelties. She was amused at the idea that the acorns which each thought he alone was getting would come from a common collection.

We ate lunch (at about 11) on the edge of the grove and then started down canyon No. 3 (from the east), and after descending three or four hundred feet we side-wound upon the ridge between it and No. 2. The canyon to the east (of No. 2 and No. 1 which joined further up) was very deep and steep sided. I went to have a look up it, and saw that high up the canyon slope above the grove of pines which I had visited and which seemed perishing was only an outlier of a much finer group that extended round into canyon No. 1, and which grew in an amphitheatre on the eastern wall of No. 1 into really tall and splendid trees.

(It suddenly occurs to me that I am possibly confusing Bishop Pines with the two needle Montereys; and that these are two needle Montereys. Whichever they are, they are rare!)

Anyway having told Hoffmann about the luxurious look of the

canyon, he had to go down into it and I went down with him,—a very steep descent. The canyon was deep, dark, and full of things he was glad to see, with wet patches though no running water. It was also full of boulders, blackberry vines hanging in vertical screens like old fashioned bead curtains, and dry waterfalls. Some of these we went down as one descends alpine chimneys by straddling from side to side. Finally we came to one that we could not descend. We took separate paths back to the ridge again, and I got up all right but had to wriggle on all fours through a grove of manzanita which was a little hard on bare knees (for I wore shorts); but Hoffmann got into a bad place. I waited sometime for him, but finally he also emerged. While waiting I saw Mrs. R. struggling along far below in the canyon where the ridge footed into it. While I watched her progress with her heavy sack of acorns on her back, unknown to her, Daniell still further down the canyon where it had become flat floored was watching me, unknown to me.

In N.E., if we had been similarly far apart, we would ordinarily have been wholly out of range of each other,—except of course on ledgy places like the top of Goose Eye.*

Finally we all assembled where Daniell was. Hoffmann arrived last of all, so intent on flora that he would have walked past the human fauna that we were without seeing us, had we not hailed him.

Speaking of fauna, we saw on the mesa the day before a grey fox, and on this day a spotted skunk, and a drove of the wild pigs, the descendants of the domestic pigs said to have been put on the island in Spanish days. It was a strange sight to see a large black pig against the sky scampering down the long, rather steep edge of a chaparral covered ridge. We also saw many ravens, who perhaps followed us overhead, a number of hawks, a bald eagle, and lower down heard and saw meadow larks. And a little below the point of assembling, a herd of three deer (not native but recently imported upon the island) watched us pass.

The canyon we were in opened upon the lower mesa behind the ranch house. While we were passing through one of the corrals, perhaps 300 by 100 yards, a drove of perhaps 100 steers went past us in the charge of 5 or 6 cowboys. They had been landed a few

*A sharp peak in the northerly White Mountains of Maine. [Ed.]

days before and were being driven into the grasslands. It was interesting to see how they were handled, and their tendency to round themselves up into a compact circular herd.

We reached camp at a little after one o'clock and promptly broke camp, and carried our goods to the end of the pier which lies here. Each article had to be lowered at the end of a rope into the skiff, and we ourselves to descend by a ships ladder. The "Ruby A" was under way after two; headed for Santa Cruz Island.

This island was formerly operated as a single ranch. It was owned by Justinian Caire and is still owned by his descendants, but has been divided into two ranches. Unlike Santa Rosa it has no central massif, but has instead two long parallel ridges with a valley between in which lies the old Caire ranch, and which opens upon the sea at Prisoner's Harbor where the Caires have a pier and a landing place. The Caire ranch runs from 30,000 to 40,000 sheep, has vineyards, gardens, orchards, and is lived at by the Caires during some of the year. It is a permanent settlement with smithy, church, school, etc., and more nearly than any other place in Calif. resembles old Spanish days. All this I learned from Hoffmann. Recently the Caires granted a concession on Pelican Bay and there is now a resort at that place run by one Eaton of S. Barbara, but no one is permitted to land elsewhere except by permission. But the Island is one impossible to police and many persons land in its coves, and often fishermen with a wish for fresh meat kill the sheep.

We crossed the channel to the West End of Santa Cruz. It was slightly overcast and almost calm. A flock of white geese flew over. There were loons on the water and in flight, "sheer water," gulls, and a number of pelicans. We passed close under the dark cliffs of West Point. The rock is volcanic and was dark or reddish. There were miles of cliffs. The whole Island is steeper, ruggeder, raggeder, and more broken than Santa Rosa; and the cliffs showed enormous caverns some of which must be 100 feet high. Indeed often the cliffs have the reverse of a normal sea cliff profile. Instead of having a talus slope cut back into a beach at sea level like this: [sketch] They are like this: [sketch]

Very likely there is a definite benching below sea level, as shown by the dotted line, but it is not apparent, and the only beaches (of pebbles) are in recesses in the shore between cliffs at the mouth

of canyons which descend to sea level. And we passed a line of cliffs the upper profile of which showed a series of hanging canyons: [sketch].

The Channel Islands are being anthropologized and botanicized by the Santa Barbara Museum of Natural History. And I believe they are being carefully geologized also,—but you know better than I whether these evidences that I have cited show coastal uplift rather than wave erosion, or whatever is the apt term for it. I vaguely remember that in Davis' book on the Antilles he instanced a shore front like that which I have pictured as indicating something, but I don't remember what. Anyway, the cliffs are as diagrammatic in nature as Davis is on paper. I should think that if once these canyons opened upon the sea there would be traces of beaches and benches in their uplifted seaward mouths. Maybe there are such traces, but they were not visible from a motor boat going rapidly by towards dusk. On the other hand, it is strange that the sea should cut back the cliffs so clearly and so much faster than the canyons cut downward without leaving something beneath the cliffs. By the chart the water is very deep below the face of the cliffs and by the way the motor boat was steered there were no offlying shoals known to the boatman. Very likely somebody has hypothecized upon all this with authority and it is foolish for me to make these amateur speculations *in vacuo:* but Hoffmann has also wondered as I have; a newspaper article on the islands says that the shelf on which the islands stood showed depths of 700 fathoms 50 years ago at spots where now there are 30 fathoms; and Hoffmann and I found a grove of ironwoods which usually grows in high canyons in a canyon only 200 or 300 feet above sea level,—evidence (if of anything geologic) rather of rapid subsidence than of uplift.

As I said, we proceeded along under these cliffs passing various harbors or rather open coves giving shelter from westerlies (the prevailing summer wind) and southeasterlies (the rain wind), but of course not from "northers," or "Sant'anas" which are dry hot winds said to have their origin in the desert and which blow from the northeast upon this coast.

The chart names a few of the harbors correctly according to local usage, but incorrectly names several ("Tinkers" is properly Orizaba; "Platt's" is properly Dicks; and "Boat Landing" is

"Lady's"), and leaves unnamed two important ones,—Fry's and Valdez. The latter, which we passed, is curious in that the way one lands there in a westerly is to row into the central one of three caves. In the cave is a bit of beach where you step out. You then walk through a tunnel and come out of the eastern entrance high up on the beach proper, where you could not have landed in the rough weather.

We passed this cove or harbor and the trail which leads thence over the mountains to the ranch house in the interior valley, and then passed Lady's, Diablo Point, and Fry's Harbor, where there is a quarry and a settlement, the stone being used on Santa Barbara's breakwater. We then entered Platt's Harbor so miscalled, really Dicks, and made a landing on a shingle beach through a mild surf just at dusk.

This is a canyon harbor, that is a canyon comes down from the hills—in this instance one with steep walls,—and the normal canyon floor or slope reaches sea level before the ends of the ridges that make the canyon walls reach sea level. The detritus washed down from the canyon fills the seaward end for about two hundred yards (the canyon is less than half that wide), so that just after landing and crossing the ridge formed by the higher part of the beach, one walks on a flat, so to speak, but the flat has not yet extended itself to the end of the canyon. The beach therefore is withdrawn from the seaward end of the canyon so that the beach is more or less protected.

We hustled our things ashore, carried them across the flat and through the muddy bed of the canyon brook, which bed had trenched itself in the flat, leaving a flat shelf between it and the canyon wall. On this shelf, at a place where the canyon wall was under cut in a cave about ten feet high, thirty feet long, and fifteen feet deep, we made camp and by wasting little time managed to get a meal before dark at (say) 5:15 p.m.

It was a romantic spot. In places the canyon walls were vertical. The canyon faced slantwise to the more or less east and west coast, looking northeastward towards Ventura. Southwest one looked straight up the canyon to Mt. Diablo or one of its spurs, the highest point on Santa Cruz. Just when it was darkest the moon rose at the very mouth of the canyon. The mountains back of Ventura appeared against it only to be burned away in the diffused moon-

light as the moon climbed a little higher. And as the moon ascended in the plane of the eliptic it exactly paralleled the slope of the canyon wall.

Am I not right in saying, as I argued to Hoffmann and Daniell, that the winter *full* moon rises about where the summer sun rises and goes much nearer the zenith than the winter sun does? That as the moon wanes it rises further and further south until at the time of the new moon it is rising about where the sun does? That when the moon begins to wax again, its risings work north again? That its extreme north point of rising occurs at the nearest full moon to Dec. 21st? That at the spring and fall equinoxes moon and sun rise and set at the same point? And that in summer it is the sun that rises north of the moon's point of rising?—This is nine tenths deduction and one tenth observation. But though the moon's orbit is a little off the plane of the eliptic (or otherwise it would be continually occulting the planets), it is not much off; and of course the plane of the eliptic is at its lowest below the celestial equator at midnight June 21st and at its highest above that equator at midnight Dec. 21st; and the planets ride high in winter and low in summer. This last is observation. And otherwise could one see Canopus, as one does here in winter, if the signs of the Zodiac were not all higher in the sky?

I don't know that I persuaded them. Daniell had an idea for a while that the moon after rising took a short cut from northeast to northwest, but gave that up when its silvering ball went rolling up the black seaward slope of the canyon. Mrs. R. went across the canyon to an exactly similar cave on its northwest wall. We chatted for a while around a fire at the cave end. Then D. went to bed in the cave, and Hoffmann out in the moonlight; and I took a stroll and finally turned in, sleeping with my head in the cave and my feet out, and the rim of the cave edged with twigs and leaves against moon and sky.

And in the night I felt the wind drop and shift from down canyon to up canyon and the surf grow louder and louder.

In the morning it was clear as crystal and a Santa Ana or "norther" was blowing fresh. The "Ruby A" was dancing about outside. We got up before sunrise and cooked eggs and bacon in the semidark and discussed weather for a while. Now the Sant'ana is supposed either to stop at noon or else to blow for three days. We

were therefore faced with the prospect of (1) leaving that day if it dropped (2) staying in the canyon for three days (3) walking some 15 miles to China Harbor in the east end of the island and taking the boat from there, if the boatman was willing to venture out upon the Channel, as was unlikely,—in which case we would have to abandon our camp outfits, specimens, etc.

So Hoffmann and I went for a walk at about 6:30 a.m. looking primarily for Jepsonia again, which had been seen at Lady's Harbor or Valdez (I forget which) by him but not elsewhere and which had been reported on the island in the 80s (then being considered a species of Saxifrage). We climbed a 45° slope out of the canyon and as we did so the sun began to light the upper slopes. Santa Cruz, seen near to in daylight for the first time, showed less green than Santa Rosa, but this was because its slopes though steeper were more deeply covered with last year's dry, yellow, oat and grass straw which masked the green. On the sheep trails, however, where this straw had been trampled down, this year's new green showed clearly, and there was a curious effect, the reverse of the usual, of yellow slopes and green trails; and in among and as background to all this were outcrops of yellow and orange and red rocks and ledges, and the dark deep evergreen green of live oaks and manzanitas, the maroon crimson of manzanita trunks, the windy blue and white of the sea, a bright sun, a blue sky. Santa Rosa was pale, spacious, and beautiful; Santa Cruz brilliant, glen like, colourful, and beautiful.

We looked for Jepsonia and found none, but we climbed to the ridge out of the canyon into the sun, and saw the wide world, the coast of Santa Cruz clear to the east end, which looked wild and barren, the red ragged tops of the backbone of the island, a stretch of downland, tawny yellow and as soft as a cat's fur, sharp against the blue sea, and miles and miles and miles of the windy white-capped Channel, and across that the Santa Barbara coast, the white gleam of a few buildings 23 sea miles away, and the Santa Ynez Range, which overhangs that city, itself overlapped by the 6000-8000 foot peaks in the unsettled back country. It was a grand view, and if we did not find Jepsonia, we did find Ironwoods growing nearer to the sea than Hoffmann had ever known them to grow and some very odd manzanitas, not shrubs but really trees, and also the Bishop Pine and the two needle Monterey Pine growing

all together, and we saw other plants which pleased him very much.

After 5 hours of side winding and upping and downing we came back to camp. The boatman had come ashore. The "Ruby A" had dragged badly. The wind had risen, and he wanted to get out. There was no getting us off or rather our stuff, but he managed to get to sea in the landing skiff with Daniell and aboard his boat, and they set out for China Harbor, spray breaking over the cabin.

The surf came into the space between the two canyon walls in sliding sheets that struck the west wall and piled up there in a high dash of foam and green and that slid off sideways across the opening to pile up on the west wall before drawing out again. We decided that since the wind had not abated at 12, we were fated to stay another day or so.

Therefore Hoffmann and I set out again, this time up the canyon. The stream is perennial, and it was an unusual experience to me in California. The slopes bore cactus, but in the bottom of the canyon were ferns, Woodwardia five feet high, and several kinds of maiden hair, lush sedges, and hencheras, etc. The bed was sometimes too steep and we climbed upon the slopes, and finally I left Hoffmann to his canyon trail and myself paralleled his course on the steep open slopes about 50 to 200 feet above him, going of course much faster than he, though going further, because my movement was unhampered by boulders and vegetation. So I would go along until I knew I was ahead of him and choose a point where I could look down into the canyon and wait till I saw him coming, meanwhile enjoying the sun. Then when he appeared I would hail him and go on again.

We thus proceeded working up to about 1000 feet and coming together at a point where his canyon rose up so steeply that I ran into it.

And he had found Jepsonia, growing almost rankly,—and a bulrush.

We returned, both on the slopes, and found that the "Santa Ana," not playing true to form, had dropped to a breath. So we made ready to depart, and I had a swim while two sea lions cruised about, perhaps 150 feet away. The water was like Maine, but not too cold.

The "Ruby A" reappeared. The surf made embarking exciting

and I had to wade, but we got off successfully, and crossed the Channel leaving at 4:45 p.m. at an hour when the pelicans were working overtime, flying like terns.

At 7:45 we reached Stearns' Wharf, and one of the most interesting and beautiful trips I have ever had was over.

And now closing the longest letter I have ever written and written, too, all in one day, I wish all of you and Aunt Dutchie a Merry Christmas.

With love from us all

Austin